

JS-6

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

PO CHIH TSENG,

Plaintiff,

v.

JACK SIADEK and MONICA  
SIADEK,

Defendants.

**Case No. CV 17-00575-MWF (RAOx)**

**ORDER REMANDING ACTION  
AND DENYING APPLICATIONS  
TO PROCEED WITHOUT  
PREPAYING FEES OR COSTS**

**I.**

**FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

Plaintiff Po Chih Tseng (“Plaintiff”) filed an unlawful detainer action in Los Angeles County Superior Court against Jack Siadek and Monica Siadek (“Defendants”) on or about December 27, 2016. Notice of Removal (“Removal”) & Attached Complaint for Unlawful Detainer (“Compl.”) and Notice of Demurrer, Dkt. No. 1. Defendants are allegedly tenants of real property located in Torrance, California (“the property”). Compl., ¶¶ 1, 3, 6. Plaintiff is the owner of the property. *Id.* at ¶ 4.

Defendants filed a Notice of Removal on January 24, 2017, invoking the Court’s federal question jurisdiction asserting that Defendants’ Demurrer to the

1 Complaint raises issues under federal law. Removal at 2. The same day,  
 2 Defendants filed Applications to Proceed Without Prepaying Fees or Costs. Dkt.  
 3 Nos. 3, 4.

## 4 II.

### 5 DISCUSSION

6 Federal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction, having subject matter  
 7 jurisdiction only over matters authorized by the Constitution and statute. *See, e.g.,*  
 8 *Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co.*, 511 U.S. 375, 377, 114 S. Ct. 1673, 128  
 9 L.Ed.2d 391 (1994). It is this Court’s duty always to examine its own subject  
 10 matter jurisdiction, *see Arbaugh v. Y&H Corp.*, 546 U.S. 500, 514, 126 S. Ct. 1235,  
 11 163 L.Ed.2d 1097 (2006), and the Court may remand a case summarily if there is  
 12 an obvious jurisdictional issue. *Cf. Scholastic Entm’t, Inc. v. Fox Entm’t Grp., Inc.*,  
 13 336 F.3d 982, 985 (9th Cir. 2003) (“While a party is entitled to notice and an  
 14 opportunity to respond when a court contemplates dismissing a claim on the merits,  
 15 it is not so when the dismissal is for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.”) (omitting  
 16 internal citations). A defendant attempting to remove an action from state to  
 17 federal court bears the burden of proving that jurisdiction exists. *See Scott v.*  
 18 *Breeland*, 792 F.2d 925, 927 (9th Cir. 1986). Further, a “strong presumption”  
 19 against removal jurisdiction exists. *See Gaus v. Miles, Inc.*, 980 F.2d 564, 567 (9th  
 20 Cir. 1992).

21 As noted above, Defendants assert that this Court has subject matter  
 22 jurisdiction due to the existence of a federal question. (Removal at 2.) Section  
 23 1441 provides, in relevant part, that a defendant may remove to federal court a civil  
 24 action in state court of which the federal court has original jurisdiction. *See* 28  
 25 U.S.C. § 1441(a). Section 1331 provides that federal “district courts shall have  
 26 original jurisdiction of all civil actions arising under the Constitution, laws, or  
 27 treaties of the United States.” *See id.* § 1331.

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1 Here, the Court's review of the Notice of Removal and the attached  
2 Complaint and Demurrer makes clear that this Court does not have federal question  
3 jurisdiction over the instant matter. Plaintiff could not have brought this action in  
4 federal court, in that Plaintiff does not allege facts supplying federal question  
5 jurisdiction, and therefore removal was improper. *See* 28 U.S.C. 1441(a);  
6 *Caterpillar, Inc. v. Williams*, 482 U.S. 386, 392, 107 S.Ct. 2425, 2429, 96 L.Ed.2d  
7 318 (1987) ("Only state-court actions that originally could have been filed in  
8 federal court may be removed to federal court by the defendant.") (footnote  
9 omitted).

10 First, there is no federal question apparent on the face of Plaintiff's  
11 complaint, which alleges only a simple unlawful detainer cause of action. *See*  
12 *Wescom Credit Union v. Dudley*, No. CV 10-8203 GAF (SSx), 2010 WL 4916578,  
13 \*2 (C.D.Cal. Nov. 22, 2010) ("An unlawful detainer action does not arise under  
14 federal law.") (citation omitted); *IndyMac Federal Bank, F.S.B. v. Ocampo*, No.  
15 EDCV 09-2337 PA(DTBx), 2010 WL 234828, at \*2 (C.D.Cal. Jan. 13, 2010)  
16 (remanding an action to state court for lack of subject matter jurisdiction where  
17 plaintiff's complaint contained only an unlawful detainer claim).

18 Second, there is no merit to Defendants' contention that federal question  
19 jurisdiction exists because Defendants' Demurrer raises issues of federal law.  
20 Removal at 2. It is well settled that a "case may not be removed to federal court on  
21 the basis of a federal defense . . . even if the defense is anticipated in the plaintiff's  
22 complaint, and even if both parties concede that the federal defense is the only  
23 question truly at issue." *Caterpillar*, 482 U.S. at 393, 107 S. Ct. at 2430. Thus, to  
24 the extent Defendants' defenses to the unlawful detainer action are based on alleged  
25 violations of federal law, those defenses do not provide a basis for federal question  
26 jurisdiction. *See id.* Because Plaintiff's complaint does not present a federal  
27 question, either on its face or as artfully pled, the court lacks jurisdiction under 28  
28 U.S.C. § 1331.

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III.

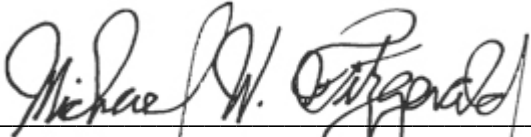
CONCLUSION

Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that this case is REMANDED to the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, forthwith.

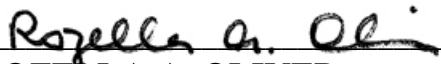
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Defendants' Applications to Proceed Without Prepaying Fees or Costs are DENIED as moot.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: January 30, 2017

  
MICHAEL W. FITZGERALD  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Presented by:

  
ROZELLA A. OLIVER  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE